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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, November 29, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Thanksgiving and the Youngest Generation." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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A friend of mine told me the other day that she always waits until the morning after to judge whether a party was a success. Her test of success is the way she felt not at but after the party. I think that's a pretty good rule for testing holiday celebrations for the children. For example, the way the youngsters feel the day after Thanksgiving will be a very good proof of how wisely their mother or their hostess arranged the big occasion.

Many of us grown-ups don't realize how hard holidays can be on the younger members of the family, because most of these celebrations are planned from the grown-up point of view. The fun and the food often suits the uncles and aunts but not the small nephews and nieces. For some strange reason, hard to understand, many sensible parents and fond relatives seem to lose their judgment on such occasions. The rules that have kept the youngsters in good health and spirits on the other days of the year, go to the winds on Thanksgiving or Christmas. Meals at strange times rather than at regular hours; too many sweets and other rich foods, both at meals and between meals; too late hours; too little rest and sleep; naps forgotten; too much excitement -- so the holiday often goes. Results show the day after. The youngsters may suffer from digestive attacks, nerves, irritable dispositions or just general weariness -- hard not only on them but also on parents who have to get along with them.

But a little forethought and planning ahead can make a holiday pleasant for grown-ups and children alike with no unpleasant aftermaths. Let me illustrate by telling you about two different Thanksgiving Days. The first one is at four-year-old Andy Smith's house. Little Andy has heard so much about Thanksgiving that he can hardly wait for it to arrive. He wakes up at the crack of dawn, just from excitement and anticipation, and can't go to sleep again. Mother wakes up late. She's been out late the night before and she's tired and hurried. She has left a lot of dinner preparations until the last minute and all Father's relatives are coming for dinner. Hurry and confusion reign in the kitchen and dining room. Little Andy doesn't eat much of his milk and cereal. All the distractions around take his mind off food, and Mother doesn't notice what he's up to anyway, as long as he keeps out of her way. But after breakfast he feels a little empty, so he fills up on the candy and nuts Mother has set around on tables in the living room and he eats some fruit cake in the kitchen.

Presently the doorbell rings and the relatives arrive. Mother looks worried and tired. She speaks sharply when Andy asks her questions. Uncle George comes in and gives Andy five big lollipops on sticks. Grandfather also has a treat for Andy -- a big box of plump chocolate bonbons with sticky insides. The more relatives that come, the more excited Andy is. And the more fuss they make over him, the more he tries to be the center of attention. When Mother comes in to tell Father he'll have to go after the cream, which hasn't arrived, and finds Andy

standing on his head in the center of the room, she tells him not to "show off." That brings Andy to tears. He's tired anyway, because he woke early, hasn't had his usual rest and his noon dinner. Here it is almost two o'clock and dinner isn't ready yet.

In spite of all Andy has eaten during the long morning, he consumes drumsticks and stuffing, pie, cake, ice cream with chocolate sauce and more candy and nuts at dinner.

After dinner Uncle George amuses the relatives by telling Andy his famous lion story with gestures. Uncle George gets down on the floor and growls at Andy, just like the ferocious lion that ate 20 little boys, and every now and then in the midst of a growl, he leaps at Andy as if he were going to eat him up. By the time he finishes Andy is terrified and almost in tears. Then Uncle John takes a hand at the entertainment. Uncle John is a great tease. He pretends that he is going to chop Andy's ears off with his jack-knife. Then he offers to teach Andy to wrestle and box like a man. Uncle John has all the fun and keeps it up until Andy really cries. Then Father tells Andy he better go and play with his little cousin, Harry, aged eight. Harry thinks Andy is a baby and says so. Andy tries to fight Harry. Father tells Andy he can leave the room. Mother apologizes for his terrible behavior. Aunt Mary says under her breath that she never saw such a spoiled child. So the day goes. Andy gets to bed late that evening after the relatives have departed. You can imagine how he feels the next day without any further remarks from me.

Small Jack Brown is the same age as Andy Smith. But somehow he gets much more fun out of his Thanksgiving Day. Jack's simple, regular schedule of living continues, even on a big day like this. Jack eats his usual breakfast at the usual time with his family. Afterward he goes outdoors to play while Mother gets the turkey in the oven and does other things in the kitchen. Jack has often heard his father say that Mother is the world's best manager, that her careful plans prevent last-minute flurries and panics even on big occasions like this when a lot of relatives will be coming to dinner. When Jack comes in from play, Mother lets him help her arrange the centerpiece and set up the place cards. When she looks in the oven at the big turkey, Jack gets a look in, too, and he remembers the story she has often told him about the Puritans and that first Thanksgiving turkey. Since dinner will be late, Jack has a glass of orange juice in the middle of the morning to keep him from being too hungry. Then he takes his morning rest and comes down all fresh and ready to meet the relatives when they arrive. Father says Mother's dinners are simple but always very good and very jolly. Mother doesn't go in for elaborate heavy food even on Thanksgiving. She has turkey to be sure, and cranberry sauce, and the vegetables that Jack often eats and likes, some crusty rolls, a gay salad and pumpkin pie for dessert. No, Jack doesn't eat that pie. He understands that pie is for grown-ups. He has some pumpkin custard baked in a little individual dish of his own, and after dinner he has some date candy and a popcorn ball. All the relatives say Mother makes about the best candy they ever tasted. Mother and Father are great on old-fashioned games, and the relatives enjoy them too. Jack takes part in the fun with the rest. Then Uncle George, who is over six feet tall, takes Jack for a ride on his shoulder, and Uncle John tells him a story about the big snow fort he once built. Jack gets to bed at the regular time, thinking what a happy day Thanksgiving is.

Tomorrow: "Turkey Talk."

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